

THE SATURDAY
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POST

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Benjamin Franklin

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SENIOR EDITOR

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Dear Dr. Lederberg:

My associates here do not feel that Life in Space shapes up as an Adventures piece and I'm afraid I have to agree with them. To chose one editorial comment which, I think, sums up the trouble, "The whole thing is so rambling and disorganized that it is difficult to understand what Lederberg is trying to tell us."

For my own part, I would add that there is distressingly little exobiology in the manuscript. A rough titration of the manuscript suggests there are but three or four pages (including pages 18, 19 and 20) which deal directly with the main theme. The rest of the text devotes itself variously to the cosmology of the solar system, evolutionary principles, terrestrial biology from a genetic point of view and a justification of the space exploration (instrumented) program.

I will grant that some consideration of these ancillary subjects would be germane to any discussion of the possibility of extra-terrestrial life, but I question the disproportionate amount of space allotted to them in this case. One immediate problem your treatment raises is that of over-lapping--your ten pages or so of cosmology cuts directly across the content of an article we have on the solar system by Lyttleton.

My only constructive suggestion in this situation is that it might be possible to shift emphasis--expand the exobiological material and subordinate the other sections of the manuscript. Do you think this is possible? If so, would you care for some professional help in reorganizing and presenting the material?

Cordially,

Richard Thruelsen

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RT/ec